

ARROWS

Kaingang arrows have one type of shaft and three types of heads, the 411 iron head for tapir, deer, and howler monkeys, the barbed wooden head for smaller game, and the blunt head with nipple for birds.

The arrow shafts are made from bamboo which is cut while green, heated, and straightened and allowed to season. The longest shafts are used for the barbed wooden heads. These heads are whittled from a branch of *kóngán*. They have a sharp point and have two edges, one of which is sharp while the other is provided with five barbs. The heads of these arrows (*lqlq*, thorn) are hardened in the fire. The origin of the use of the *kóngán* for this type of arrow may be magical, for the tree from which they are taken is very thorny. When the heads are completed they are fitted into the shafts and bound in place with *cipo*, which is wound tight around the shaft at the junction of head and shaft. Then the whole is waxed and rubbed.

The next longest are the *ndó*, the bird arrows. These are whittled from pine knots. In shape the heads resemble inverted cones with nipples at the base.

The iron-headed arrows are the shortest, as is natural because of the great weight of the head, and the most difficult to make. These iron heads may be anywhere from three inches to almost a foot long and in average shape resemble very much the bill of the spoon-billed duck. Instead of being pointed at the tip they are perfectly rounded and are sharpened to razor keenness. They are also sharpened all along both edges. They have no barbs but end in blunt flanges. These arrows are used most generally at short range and make a terrific wound.

Iron arrows are made from metal stolen from the Brazilians, heated in the fire, hammered down with stones to the proper shape, and filed to an edge with a file obtained in the same way as the iron. The arrow head is finished with three flanges at the base, the central one fitted into a deep notch made for it in a short stick. This notch is filled with a strong black wax which gives the head additional support. Then the notch is tightly wound with *cipó* and the stick is fitted into the shaft which is wrapped with *cipó* and waxed. [325]

Feathering for all but iron arrows is preferably done with the feathers of the jacatinga. The feathers are not split or wound around the shaft but bound on opposite sides of it. This is possible because only those feathers are used which have tendrils on but one edge. For iron arrows the feathers of the hawk are used. They are looked on as suited for the iron arrows because they come from such a powerful bird.

The making of arrows is done entirely by the owner.

Lances

411 The blade of this astonishing weapon is made from a single piece of iron that is worked by heating for days in the flames, pounding with stones, and then filing to razor sharpness.¹⁴ The blade of the lance illustrated is 15½ inches from the tip to the bottom of the central flange, the actual usable length 12½ inches, 3½ inches at the widest point, sweeping gracefully in to a width of 2¾ inches at the narrowest point. This was the only lance left among the Kaingáng when I came there; so it is impossible to make any general statements about the size of the blade; but I have been told that this is by no means one of the largest. Many, of course, must have been smaller, for the size of the blade depended on the size of the piece of iron obtained.

The peculiar shape of the blade might suggest that the Kaingáng lance was used principally for striking and not for stabbing. From stories it appears that the lance was used more often to strike than to stab, though stabbing was quite frequent. Nevertheless when we realize that the iron arrow heads were exactly the same shape as the lance heads it becomes clear that the shape of the lance blade was not determined by the fact that it was used more for striking than for stabbing. Obviously the drive of an arrow is always head on. The real reason that the lance was used more for striking than for stabbing was because the lance is a development of the club. The handle of the lance is exactly the same shape as a club,¹⁵ except for the fact that the lance tapers toward the notch where the blade is inserted. The lance is grasped in the same way as the club. Kaingáng lance heads have had the same shape stages as the arrows.

Curiously enough, the lances were the weapons least used by the Kaingáng. One would imagine that these lances would be ideal for slaughtering Brazilians, but the Kaingáng always left them at home when they went raiding. They preferred to cut clubs from hard woods just before attacking and to throw them away when they were finished. Sometimes they simply used their bows as clubs, but this involved danger of breakage. The Kaingáng say that they left the lances at home so that the women could use them to kill tapirs while they were gone.

The use of the lance *par excellence* was for murdering vendetta enemies. Most of the massacres were accomplished with lances. The Kaingáng beat time with their lances while they sang at the festas, so that they were fully prepared to turn upon their enemies suddenly and slaughter them.

In general the technique of making the blades is the same as for the iron arrow heads except that more than one man is needed. The heating and

¹⁴ With a file stolen from the Brazilians.

¹⁵ I.e. four-cornered; handle shaped in cross-section.

372 This process, which involves a tremendous expenditure of time and careful labor, is only used as a last resort.

The Indians exercise the greatest care to keep their fires burning, and watch them constantly so they will not die out.

When they are on the move, a woman or child always accompanies them with the task of watching over the fire, which is carried in the form of lighted sticks.

325 Before the time of peaceful contact, the Botocudo had secured iron in the course of their raids. In view of its advantages over chipped stone, this material has become precious to them and indispensable to the manufacture of their weapons. They do not work it by heating the metal but by beating it cold with hard rounded stones which they gather in shallow river waters. It is easy to imagine how much patience and perseverance are needed to shape a piece of iron into an object of completely different form and size. Suffice it to say that the making of a spearhead demands more than three months of daily labor.

They also use iron to make small knives, graters, and various other small implements. [125]

283 As already mentioned, their aprons are woven with a kind of wild nettle. This is done as follows. The women pound the plants with small clubs on every side until all the leaves and larger thorns are removed. When this is done, they make small cuts in the stem, just above the roots, and peel off the outer layer in longitudinal strips.

These strips are joined into a large bundle and placed in the water for a certain period of time. When retrieved, they are pounded hard between two sticks until only the fibers remain, free from the ligneous parts. This procedure is repeated over and again; then the fiber is dried and spun by hand upon the naked thigh, and the 286 yarn coiled into a ball. They build a very primitive loom which consists of two sticks stuck obliquely into the ground, with two other sticks fastened upon them horizontally. Squatting before this loom, the women plait in various ways, with comparative ease, the threads they have secured to the frame.

285 Their large loading baskets, *kan-nha*; the smaller waxed 415 baskets used to carry water; and the little ones, also waxed, which serve various purposes, are all plaited of *taquara mansa* [a bamboo,